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History of Science, Medicine, and Technology 140.114

Spring 1993

HUMANS AND ANIMALS

This freshman seminar explores the history of humans' relationships with animals, especially those in scientific or medical settings. Animals, while pre-eminently natural objects, are always understood in cultural contexts. Often ideas about animals tell us more about the humans who thought them than about the animals. So too, cultures mark the boundaries between humans and animals very differently. The course examines a number of ways that relationships between humans and animals have been imagined and conducted over the past centuries; contexts include hunting, zoos, museums, scientific laboratories, and children's fiction. Since we are a seminar, the focus will be on reading, discussion, and writing.

Readings:

The following five books can be purchased at the JHU bookstore in Gilman Hall. All other course readings are in the reading package.

Calvin Martin, Keepers of the Game, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

Harriet Ritvo, The Animal Estate, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Anna Sewell, Black Beauty, Troll Associates (or other editions).

E.B. White, Stuart Little, Trophy Books (or other editions).

Harlan Lane, The Wild Boy of Aveyron, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Paper 1: Compare and contrast E.B. White, Stuart Little, (any edn.) and Sarah Trimmer, Fabulous Histories: designed for the amusement and instruction of young persons, Boston: Manning and Loring, 1794 (on microfiche, Evans 27817, and xeroxed). What kinds of functions do animals play in these two texts? pedagogical? moralizing? entertaining? How does the author use animals to convey his/her messages? What kinds of changes over time might you posit from this comparison? DUE FRIDAY MARCH 8, HISTORY OF SCIENCE OFFICE AMES 204.

Paper 2: Visit a natural history museum (or other museum which features animals in some way). Describe and analyze a display or the overall organization of the museum. What view of animals is intended to be conveyed to the viewer? How typical was this view at the time in which the display or museum was created? DUE APRIL 2, IN CLASS.

Group Project: Break into groups of 3; each group is responsible for a.) finding a contemporary article which discusses animals (and, at least implicitly, humans) and b.) preparing a report on it for presentation in class on April 30. Please turn in a copy of your article to my mailbox, Ames 204, BY MONDAY APRIL 22 so that I can xerox and distribute the articles you have chosen in class the next day.

Grades will be based upon the following:

- 20% One page comments on the reading. These should be a relatively informal response to one of the assigned readings -- either a summary of the argument, or a comment on method, style, or whatever you wish. Due every week through March 26.
- 20% Class participation. Quality as well as quantity counts.
- 20% Paper 1
- 20% Paper 2
- 20% Group Reports

Schedule of classes and readings:

Jan. 30 Introduction

Feb. 6 Medieval Humans and Animals: Making Boundaries

Joyce E. Salisbury, The Beast Within. Animals in the Middle Ages., London: Routledge, 1994. pp. 1-11, 117-146, 151-159.

Feb. 13 From Ascendancy to Dethronement

Keith Thomas, Man and the Natural World Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800 Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984, pp. 17-24, 30-35, 87-91, 100-136, 165-172.

Feb. 20 Changing Attitudes. Thomas, Man and the Natural World, pp. 51-100, 112-120.

Feb. 27 Animals as Emblems: Class and Cruelty

Anna Sewell, Black Beauty, (any edn).

Thomas, Man and the Natural World, pp. 173-191.

Mar. 5 Animals as Emblems: Status

Harriet Ritvo, The Animal Estate, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987, Chapter 1, "Barons of Beef", pp. 45-82; Chapter 5, "Exotic Captives", pp. 205-242.

FRIDAY MARCH 8: PAPER 1 DUE, AMES 204.

Mar. 12 Hunting 1

Donna Haraway, Primate Visions, London: Routledge, 1989, chapter 3 "Teddy Bear Patriarchy" pp. 26-58.

*** Mar. 19 -- Spring Break ***

Mar. 26 Hunting 2

Calvin Martin, Keepers of the Game, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, pp. 69-156.

April 2 Classifying Animals: Natural History

PAPER 2 DUE IN CLASS. Reports on papers.

April 9 Dividing Humans from Animals (Again)

Harlan Lane, The Wild Boy of Aveyron, pp. 1-69; 99-182.

April 16 Making Scientific Animals I

Robert Kohler, Lords of the Fly, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 53-90.

Hans Krebs, "The August Krogh Principle: 'For Many Problems There is an Animal on Which It Can Be Most Conveniently Studied'", Journal of Experimental Zoology 194 pp. 221-226.

MONDAY 22 APRIL: XEROXES OF GROUP PROJECT ARTICLES DUE, 204 AMES

April 23 Making Scientific Animals II

Michael Lynch, "Sacrifice and the Transformation of the Animal Body into a Scientific Object: Laboratory Culture and Ritual Practice in the Neurosciences", Social Studies of Science 18 (1988), pp. 265-89.

Susan Lederer, "Political Animals: The Shaping of Bio-medical Research Literature in Twentieth-Century America" Isis 83, (1992) pp. 61-79.

April 30 In-class presentation of Group Projects.